

Application Number 09/876,432
Responsive to Office Action mailed September 8, 2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of collecting information related to RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting a category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;
- (b) using the RFID reader to interrogate at least one RFID tag associated with an item of interest to obtain information associated with the item of interest, wherein the item of interest is not currently associated with the category selected in step (a); and
- (c) thereafter associating ~~the information related to the at least one item~~ obtained in step (b) with the category selected in step (a); and
- (d) saving the categorized information obtained in step (c) in a database.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Original): The method of claim 2, wherein step (a) comprises selecting a category from among a list of categories displayed on the user interface.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 2, wherein step (a) ~~comprises~~comprising selecting a category and designating the attributes of items in that category to define the category.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of claim 2, wherein the category describes a location where an item was interrogated.

Claim 6 (Original): The method of claim 2, wherein the category describes a class of items.

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Claim 7 (Original): The method of claim 2, wherein categories from which a user may select are uploaded from a data storage device and displayed on the user interface.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting at least two categories of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;
- (b) using the RFID reader to interrogate at least one RFID tag associated with an item of interest to obtain information associated with the item of interest, wherein the item of interest is not currently associated with the categories selected in step (a); and
- (c) thereafter categorizing ~~the information related to the at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s)~~ obtained in step (b) with at least one of the categories selected in step (a); and
- (d) saving the categorized information obtained in step (c) in a database.

Claim 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein the categories are mutually exclusive.

Claim 11 (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein the categories are not mutually exclusive.

Claim 12 (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein one category describes whether an item is present in a storage area.

Claim 13 (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein the categories describe different types of items.

Claim 14 (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from the RFID tag itself.

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Claim 15 (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from a database stored in memory of the RFID reader.

Claim 16 (Original): The method of claim 15, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

Claim 17 (Original): The method of claim 16, wherein the removable data storage device is a flash memory card.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting at least one category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;
- (b) interrogating RFID tags associated with items, at least one of which is within the category of items;
- (c) categorizing information related to at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) in at least one of the categories; and
- (d) ignoring any RFID-tagged-item that may not be categorized in at least one category.

Claim 19 (Original): The method of claim 18, wherein the method further includes the step of:

- (e) saving the categorized information in a database.

Claim 20 (Original): The method of claim 19, wherein at least one category describes items of a certain type.

Claim 21 (Original): The method of claim 19, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from the RFID tag itself.

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Claim 22 (Original): The method of claim 19, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from a database stored in memory of the RFID reader.

Claim 23 (Original): The method of claim 22, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

Claim 24 (Original): The method of claim 23, wherein the removable data storage device is a flash memory card.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): A method of identifying items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a database including entries associated with certain items;
- (b) interrogating RFID tags associated with items with an RFID reader; and
- (c) providing an indication to a user when the RFID reader interrogates an RFID tag associated with an item that does not match an entry on the database.

Claim 26 (Original): The method of claim 25, wherein the indication comprises illuminating a light source.

Claim 27 (Original): The method of claim 25, wherein the indication comprises providing an audible signal.

Claim 28 (Original): The method of claim 25, wherein the indication is provided on a display.

Claim 29 (Original): The method of claim 28, wherein the display is a component of a user interface associated with a portable RFID reader.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 29, wherein the user interface enables a user to create a database record for the item that does not match an entry on the database.

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Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 29, wherein the user interface enables a user to enter information into the RFID reader related to the item that does not match an entry on the database.

Claims 32-37 (Canceled).

Claim 38 (Currently Amended): A method of obtaining information related to items of interest associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) interrogating RFID tags, each associated with an item, to obtain information related to the items for a purpose other than determining the presence or absence of the items in a storage area; and
- (b) simultaneously with step (a), using the information obtained in step (a) for determining the presence or absence of the items in the storage area.

Claim 39 (Currently Amended): A method of obtaining information related to items of interest associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) interrogating RFID tags, each associated with an item, to obtain information for a first purpose of determining whether the items are in a predetermined order within a storage area; and
- (b) simultaneously with step (a), using information obtained in step (a) for a second purpose of determining the presence or absence of the items in the storage area.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): A method of obtaining information related to items of interest associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) interrogating RFID tags, each associated with an item, to determine information related to the items for a first purpose of searching for certain items on a predetermined search list; and
- (b) simultaneously with step (a), using the information obtained in step (a) for a second purpose of determining the presence or absence of the items in the storage area.

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Claim 41 (Currently Amended): A method of obtaining information related to items of interest associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) interrogating RFID tags, each associated with an item, to determine information related to the items for a first purpose of checking items into or out of a storage area; and
- (b) simultaneously with step (a), using the information obtained in step (a) for a second purpose of determining the presence or absence of the items in the storage area.

Claim 42 (Previously Presented): A method of reconciling an inventory list of items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) using an RFID reader to interrogate at least one RFID tag associated with an item;
- (b) determining whether the item is represented on the inventory list as being present, and if not;
- (c) indicating to a user in real time that the inventory list indicates that the item is absent; and
- (d) enabling the user to correct the inventory list in real time by confirming that the item is present using a user interface associated with the RFID reader.

Claim 43 (Original): The method of claim 42, wherein the user interface comprises a display.

Claim 44 (Original): The method of claim 43, wherein the display is a touch panel display.

Claim 45 (Previously Presented): A method of reconciling an inventory list of items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) using an RFID reader to interrogate RFID tags each associated with an item;
- (b) determining whether an item represented on the inventory list as being present is among the items whose RFID tags were interrogated, and if not;
- (c) indicating to a user in real time that the inventory list indicates that the item is present; and
- (d) enabling the user to correct the inventory list in real time by confirming that the item is absent using a user interface associated with the RFID reader.

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Claim 46 (Original): The method of claim 45, wherein the user interface comprises a display.

Claim 47 (Original): The method of claim 46, wherein the user interface comprises a touch panel display.

Claim 48 (Previously Presented): A method of organizing collected data related to items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) using an RFID reader to interrogate RFID tags, each associated with an item, wherein the items are not arranged or interrogated in an order associated with their desired locations in a storage area;
- (b) organizing information obtained from the RFID tags in an order associated with the desired locations of the items in a storage area; and
- (c) providing the organized information from step (b) to a user.

Claim 49 (Original): The method of claim 48, wherein step (c) comprises providing information to the user on a display.

Claims 50-74 (Canceled)

Claim 75 (Currently Amended): A method of collecting information related to RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting a category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader, wherein a category is a group of items that possess specified attributes and represents a portion of an entire group of items having associated RFID tags;
- (b) using the RFID reader to interrogate at least one RFID tag associated with an item of interest to obtain information associated with the item of interest, wherein the item of interest is not currently associated with the category selected in step (a);
- (c) thereafter associating the information related to ~~the at least one item~~ obtained in step (b) with the category selected in step (a); and

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- (d) saving the categorized information obtained in step (c) in a database.

Claim 76 (Previously Presented): A method of using information related to RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting a category of items using a user interface associated with a computer;
(b) obtaining a list of at least one RFID-tagged item; and
(c) associating information related to the at least one item with the selected category.

Claim 77 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 76, wherein the method further includes the step of:

- (d) saving the categorized information in a database.

Claim 78 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 77, wherein step (a) comprises selecting a category from among a list of categories displayed on the user interface.

Claim 79 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 77, wherein step (a) comprising selecting a category and designating the attributes of items in that category to define the category.

Claim 80 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 77, wherein the category describes a location where an item was interrogated.

Claim 81 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 77, wherein the category describes a class of items.

Claim 82 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 77, wherein categories from which a user may select are uploaded from a data storage device and displayed on the user interface.

Claim 83 (Previously Presented): A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

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- (a) selecting at least two categories of items using a user interface associated with a computer;
- (b) obtaining a list of at least one RFID-tagged item; and
- (c) categorizing information related to the at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) in at least one of the categories.

Claim 84 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 83, wherein the method further includes the step of:

- (d) saving the categorized information in a database.

Claim 85 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 84, wherein the categories are mutually exclusive.

Claim 86 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 84, wherein the categories are not mutually exclusive.

Claim 87 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 84, wherein one category describes whether an item is present in a storage area.

Claim 88 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 84, wherein the categories describe different types of items.

Claim 89 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 84, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from a database stored in memory of the RFID reader.

Claim 90 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 89, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

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Claim 91 (Previously Presented): A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting at least one category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;
- (b) interrogating RFID tags associated with items, at least one of which is within the category of items;
- (c) categorizing information related to the at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) in at least one of the categories; and
- (d) ignoring any RFID-tagged-item that may not be categorized in at least one category.

Claim 92 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 91, wherein the method further includes the step of:

- (e) saving the categorized information in a database.

Claim 93 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 92, wherein at least one category describes items of a certain type.

Claim 94 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 92, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

Claim 95 (Previously Presented): A method of using information related to items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) obtaining a list of information related to the RFID tags, the list organized in the order in which the RFID tags were interrogated by an RFID reader; and
- (b) organizing the information in an order other than the order in which the tags were interrogated by the RFID reader.

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Claim 96 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 95, wherein only information related to RFID-tagged items that are out of position by at least a predetermined amount is organized in the order.

Claim 97 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 95, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(c) comparing the organized information from step (b) with a predetermined ordered list.

Claim 98 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 97, wherein the predetermined ordered list is a list of items in an expected order of location in a storage area.

Claim 99 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 97, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

(d) creating a list of items that are on the predetermined ordered list but not among the ordered list from step (b).

Claim 100 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 97, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

(d) creating a list of items that are on the ordered list from step (b) but not among the predetermined ordered list.

Claim 101 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 97, wherein both the ordered list of step (b) and the predetermined ordered list are provided to a computer by a portable RFID reader.

Claim 102 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 97, wherein both the ordered list of step (b) and the predetermined ordered list are stored on a removable data storage device by a portable RFID reader, and uploaded from the removable data storage device to a computer.